



*Bat Conservation International*



## **Bat Conservation International and USDA Forest Service: Partnership Opportunities**

### **CONNECTING SCIENCE WITH CONSERVATION**

**Bat Conservation International (BCI)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting bat conservation, education and research, worldwide. BCI has supported and collaborated with others to enhance and solidify the public and scientific understanding of the unique and beneficial role of bats worldwide.

BCI was founded in 1982 and remains the primary champion for bats at a global scale through public education including classroom curriculum, collaborative research, development of grants, and through partnerships with state and federal agencies to instill bat conservation as a fundamental aspect of managing public lands. BCI facilitates positive solutions to natural resource management situations concerning bats that benefit people and bats alike.

The **USDA Forest Service** is a natural resource agency dedicated to the sustained management of the nation's natural resources and service to people. Managing public lands in national forests and grasslands, it is the largest forestry research organization in the world, and provides technical and financial assistance to state and private forestry agencies. The Forest Service is responsible for managing habitat to maintain populations of threatened, endangered, sensitive, and other species of plants and animals on the national forests and grasslands. The agency is involved in acquiring, developing and disseminating up-to-date information on the status, distribution, population trends, ecology, conservation needs, and stewardship of these species and habitats to accomplish needed management and conserve these natural resources.

### **MUTUAL GOALS, MUTUAL BENEFITS**

The Forest Service and BCI have a long history of partnership and collaboration on a wide range of projects devoted to bat conservation. BCI has worked with the Forest Service nationally and at local levels to provide guidance and support for forest planning, to protect or manage important bat habitat, to assess habitat use, to conserve threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, and to research bat issues relevant to National Forest System management.

Recognizing the opportunity to expand on these collaborations, in April, 2004 the Forest Service and BCI signed a service-wide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU provides a framework for cooperation between the two organizations, to help achieve our mutual goals of ensuring the sound management of the nation's national forests and grasslands, and protecting the biological resources key to bat conservation that these lands and waters sustain.

### **A TRACK RECORD OF COLLABORATION**

- **Management for the Indiana Bat**

BCI and the Forest Service have collaborated to research and conduct surveys to better understand the habitat relations and conservation needs for this endangered bat species that inhabits eastern forests. Collaborative efforts include the protection of critical cave hibernacula, support to conduct studies to assess the use of forest habitat by this species, educational efforts to inform the public and others on the species ecology, and contributing to a scientific symposium and publication of the proceedings on the Indiana bat.

- **Development of guidance for managing eastern bats**

BCI and the Forest Service worked with others to publish the Bats in Eastern Woodlands handbook that has become an invaluable resource to forest managers on the ecological background and management approaches for bats in eastern forests.

- **Grants**

BCI has contributed towards Forest Service System based projects through the North American Bat Conservation Partnership competitive grants program, helping to fund an array of projects including: development of cave mine, and forest-roosting bat survey protocols, cave and mine protection, forest landscape studies, and cave, and mine closures.

- **Education**

BCI facilitated and collaborated with the Forest Service and others to conduct a 2004 North American Symposium on Bats and Forest Conservation that was attended by over 250 practitioners and researchers from the USA and Canada. The session provided the latest information on bats and their habitat relations, workshops for practitioners, and the future publication of the proceedings.

- **Training**

BCI has collaborated with the Forest Service and other agency partners to conduct regional and national trainings on forest management and bat conservation and bat-compatible mine closure methods that have trained hundreds of Forest Service biologists and natural resource managers nationwide.

## **PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

The new MOU between the Forest Service and BCI provides the framework for expanding collaborations related to the conservation of bats and their habitats.

- BCI is the flagship for bat conservation and provides expertise and supportive facilitation to address Forest Service management issues such as wind generation and forest management.
- BCI is proficient at initiating and facilitating cooperative efforts with the Forest Service, other agencies, and non-government organizations to complete conservation efforts in a collaborative and cost-effective manner.
- The Forest Service and BCI can work together nationally, regionally, and locally to identify and support priorities for research, education, and management that will meet mutual objectives for species conservation.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

BCI is proficient at and staffed to work with an array of projects and issues concerning bat conservation. Forest Service staff are encouraged to contact BCI at their headquarters in Austin, TX at the below contact to find the most appropriate staff person to work with them. Also, BCI manages an informative website that provides information and links to cover bat ecology, current issues, upcoming training opportunities, resource materials and more. Forest Service national forest, research laboratories, and state and private forestry offices are located in most states; contact information is available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/national.shtml>.

### **BCI Home Office**

Bat Conservation International     <http://www.batcon.org/>  
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**Contacts for Service-Wide MOU** (USFS# 04-SU-11132422-053)

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